

## Centennial West: Essays on the Northern Tier States

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the mixed emotions of the immigrants responding to the challenges of bringing wild lands into cultivation and to the anguish of leaving old homes behind is poignant.

Korytová-Magstadt's bibliography and her brief essay on researching Czech ancestors will be helpful to both historians and genealogists. A glossary of Czech terms and several useful maps are also included, although readers might wish for a more detailed map of the various regions of nineteenth-century Bohemia.

This book will be of interest to historians with an ethnic focus and especially interesting to persons with Czech family backgrounds.

*Centennial West: Essays on the Northern Tier States*, edited by William L. Lang. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991. ix, 290 pp. Maps, tables, index. \$30.00 cloth, \$17.50 paper.

REVIEWED BY MARY ELLEN ROWE, CENTRAL MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

*Centennial West* is a collection of the best papers submitted for the 1989 Centennial West Conference, celebrating one hundred years of statehood for the six Northern Tier states (Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota). The essays' topics are diverse, spanning the hundred years between 1850 and 1950.

William Robbins's historical overview portrays the West of 1900 to 1940 as an economic colony of the East. His analysis is supported by John C. Hudson's conclusion that the transcontinental railroads integrated the West into the national economy as a producer of raw materials and a consumer of manufactured goods, thus reinforcing the region's colonial status.

Is the Northern Tier a distinctive region? John Wunder finds evidence of a "distinctive legal culture" in the laws passed by Northern Tier territorial legislatures, while Roland DeLorme's statistical analysis of territorial crime rates finds the region not "dramatically more violent" than the East, though law enforcement was hampered by the vast distances and inadequate funding.

William Lass's description of the first attempt to organize Dakota Territory recalls the optimism and relentless boosterism that characterized nineteenth-century western development. That optimism and sense of common purpose faded in the twentieth century, however. W. Thomas White's comparison of the 1894 Pullman Boycott and the 1922 Shopmen's Strike finds northwestern communities increasingly fragmented by economic class and conflicting ideologies. Perhaps the region's brief history and rapid changes have not permitted a clear sense of identity to emerge, as it has experienced succeeding genera-

tions of colonization, economic exploitation, economic collapse, and painful rebirth. Leonard J. Arrington and Don C. Reading describe the impact of the New Deal on the Northern Tier states as the beginning of an economic recovery soon to be transformed into a new industrial revolution by the Second World War.

Considering the Native American experience, Kent Richards's case study finds the people of the Muckleshoot Reservation in western Washington surviving and even flourishing through adaptation to commercial farming and dairying in the twentieth century. The picture of the Dakota tribes is much grimmer, but both Frank Pommersheim and Carole Bennett offer reason for hope. Nearly destroyed by dispossession and federal Indian policy, the people survive, drawing spiritual power from the land and a new sense of nationhood from their common struggle and an ancient sense of identity.

The volume offers a collection of excellent essays, but if, as the editor suggests, its purpose is to define the Northern Tier as a distinctive region, that definition does not emerge. The two most reflective essays, Paula M. Nelson's attempt to define the western psyche through a case study of the settlers in the West River country of South Dakota and Donald Worster's concluding essay on the case for a unique western identity, come closest to offering a common theme for the volume. Nelson's settlers live on hope and faith, and find identity and purpose in the struggle to survive in a harsh land. For Worster, it is the relationship to the land that defines the western character: the experience of vast spaces and natural grandeur, of scarcity and disappointed hopes, of a struggle against nature that evolves among the survivors into a grudging sense of partnership with nature. In one way or another, these general themes might be read into any of the volume's essays.

Individually, the essays offer insights into the character of the Northern Tier states. Some suggest useful lines of inquiry for regional studies in general. Overall, however, the volume demonstrates that regional identity may be more a matter of perception than objective fact, and in any case is certainly easier to feel than to explain.

*Looking for History on Highway 14*, by John E. Miller. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993. xiv, 254 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$15.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY NORMAN E. FRY, SOUTHEASTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The age of the automobile has brought with it the age of historians who interpret the meaning of America's highways and thoroughfares.

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